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DUTY: UNDERSTANDING THE MOST SUBLIME MILITARY VALUE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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by

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B.S., United States Military Academy, 1974  
M.A., Duke University, 1984

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After an extensive search of literature by and about the military profession and professional military officers, this study concludes that the concept of Duty includes five imperatives: defense of the United States, support of the government in the performance of its constitutional duties, dedication to the military profession, selflessness, and courage. As the officer applies these five imperatives in his professional life, balance is essential. For example, it is every officer's Duty to seek in his or her professional life a balance between the competing demands of self and selflessness.

This study finds the definition of Duty in FM 100-1 inadequate and proposes a definition of Duty based on the five imperatives derived from the survey of literature. It contends that the distinction between individual and institutional values in the Army Ethic dilutes the power of a time-honored word like Duty. It also finds that the essential idea of balance is missing from military ethics instruction and that Duty is not addressed as a separate value within the Army schoolhouse. The study recommends a reconsideration of both the ethics curriculum in the Army schoolhouse and the Army Ethic described in FM 100-1 to better account for the importance of Duty in the profession of arms.

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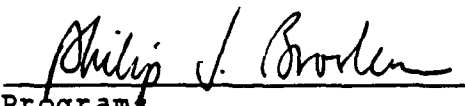
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## ABSTRACT

### DUTY: UNDERSTANDING THE MOST SUBLIME MILITARY VALUE.

A search for an understanding of what the Army means by Duty and a look at how the officer learns about Duty in the Army schoolhouse.

By Major Martin E. Dempsey, USA, 108 pages.

After an extensive search of literature by and about the military profession and professional military officers, this study concludes that the concept of Duty includes five imperatives: defense of the United States, support of the government in the performance of its constitutional duties, dedication to the military profession, selflessness, and courage. As the officer applies these five imperatives in his professional life, balance is essential. For example, it is every officer's Duty to seek in his or her professional life a balance between the competing demands of self and selflessness.

<sup>+thesis</sup>  
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LTC William Wattendorf of the Center for Army Leadership was an invaluable source of information about the study of military ethics.

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Majors Bobby Bell, Frank George, Doug Lute, Bob Merkl, Mark Hertling, and Colin Willis fanned the flame often. They live the life of Duty I have spent the past two years trying to define.

And Deanie, Chris, Megan, and Caity who share everything with me.

I would also like to apologize to the many fine women officers I have met throughout my career. Despite good intentions, I find that I lack the skill to use both masculine and feminine gender gracefully in my writing. When I use masculine pronouns in this study, I intend them to mean both male and female officers.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Chapter One	Of Icebergs and Abstractions: Why Study Duty?.....	1
Chapter Two	The Literature of Duty.....	11
Chapter Three	The Pedagogy of Duty.....	59
Chapter Four	Toward Richer and Thinner Meanings...	80
Chapter Five	Sentinels at the Bacchanal.....	93



## Chapter One

### Of Icebergs and Abstractions: Why Study Duty?

In describing the care with which he chose the words in his novels, Ernest Hemingway once wrote: "The dignity of movement of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water."<sup>1</sup> Hemingway, Nobel prize winner and one-time soldier, believed that certain words, certain abstractions, carry such weight, such power, and such feeling that they defy detailed examination. In fact, he believed that a writer can actually detract from the power of some words by scrutinizing them too closely, by looking beneath the tip of the iceberg.

Hemingway may be right. The effort to explain and define some of the Army's functional abstractions like Leadership, Honor, and Duty sometimes seems futile. Often the effort to put too fine an edge on these words becomes an exercise in piling abstraction upon abstraction. Anyone making such an effort must first recognize the power these words hold because of their ambiguity and only then proceed at the risk of trivializing them.

Hemingway's warning notwithstanding, there are some very compelling reasons to look beneath the tip of the iceberg of Army abstractions. Words like Duty, Honor, and Country form the cornerstone values of the profession of arms. One of them in particular, Duty, may be more important today than at any other time in our history.

Today's professional officer is many things to many people. He is student, teacher, scientist, corporate executive, and warrior. He is a modern-day "Renaissance man," a soldier-scholar confronted with competing external priorities and internal motivations. He is asked to do more--not with less as the cliché claims--but with enormous resources in manpower, money, and equipment at his disposal. As his responsibilities increase, so does the importance of his concept of Duty, for his concept of Duty will influence how he responds to increased responsibility and how he uses the resources entrusted to his care.

The purpose of this study, then, is threefold: to seek an understanding of what the military profession means by Duty from a broad survey of post-World War II literature, to examine formal Army instruction on ethics in general and Duty in particular from pre-commissioning through the Army War College, and--based on a comparison of the findings in the first two parts of the study--to decide

if the Army's curriculum for Duty instruction meets the needs of the officer corps for a clear and coherent definition of Duty such as the one gleaned from the survey of literature. The challenge this study accepts is to do all of that without trivializing this "sublimest" value of the military profession.

The best soldiers have always served with a highly developed concept of Duty, but sometimes their individual concepts of Duty seemed to have little in common. This complicates the study of Duty. For example, both MacArthur and Marshall performed their Duty to the country as they understood it. However, their ideas about civilian-military relations were different; their ideas about professionalism were different; ultimately, their ideas about Duty were different. Each responded to the ambiguities of his time, to the shifts in the political and professional ideologies, differently.

Nevertheless, although there seems to be considerable scope within which an individual officer may come to an understanding of Duty, there must also be boundaries and imperatives common to every officer's concept of Duty if Duty is to be a meaningful value in the profession of arms. Most agree that at the end of his career MacArthur stepped

beyond those boundaries. Today's officer faces many of the same ambiguities about Duty that MacArthur and Marshall faced and more.

Today's officer must come to both a personal and corporate understanding about Duty as part of a profession that is in many ways itself perpetually searching for a self-concept. The business of the profession of arms is war, and war--according to Clausewitz--is at the same time an autonomous science with its own methods and goals and yet a subordinate science with its ultimate purposes mandated from outside itself. The same is true of the military profession; it is both an autonomous body and a subordinate instrument of the government.

As an autonomous body, a profession, the officer corps has its own sense of expertise, responsibility, and corporateness.<sup>2</sup> In theory, the profession should clearly define a successful career for the officer, a definition which should include the expectations of the profession and the values by which the officer should live. Among these values should be a concept of Duty. In practice, however, the profession bombards the officer with signals about his duties within the profession. Most of these signals help the officer understand his Duty. Some of them, however, fit this description offered by LTG Walter F. Ulmer in 1983:

"Most mischief and lack of motivation in our systems is caused by well-intentioned policies promulgated by a dedicated chain of command."<sup>3</sup> Sometimes professionalism and its policies confuse rather than clarify Duty.

As an instrument of the government, the professional officer is charged with the "management of violence."<sup>4</sup> This is the description of Duty Harold Lasswell gave to the military profession nearly forty years ago. For about the past ten of those forty years, however, Lasswell's description of the military's purpose has proved less than complete. Since Vietnam, the face of war has changed, and the profession has had to change with it, not only in organization and tactics but also in self-conception. Today, the business of the military profession as described by General Sir John Hackett is more complex: "to furnish a constituted authority in situations where force is or might be used the greatest number of options."<sup>5</sup> There is a big difference in the responsibilities implicit in Lasswell's notion of Duty and those implicit in Hackett's--and these are but two of many opinions about the nature and purpose of the military profession.

Not only does the professional officer take his orders from the government, but since World War II he has also had an increasing role in the development of governmental

policies. The degree of the military's participation in government will of course vary with the political tides, but some active participation will continue as long as there is a threat to the security of the United States. It is increasingly likely, therefore, that the high-ranking military officer may find himself serving outside the normal pattern of assignments and in a position where he must balance conflicting constitutional, governmental, and professional ideologies in performing his Duty.

Chapter 4 of FM 100-1, The Army, is entitled, "The Profession of Arms." It includes the following definition of Duty:

Duty is obedience and disciplined performance despite difficulty and danger. It is doing what should be done when it should be done.<sup>6</sup>

This definition is incomplete. It neglects the most important and most difficult aspect of Duty--knowing what should be done. Without a proper understanding of what should be done, Duty is at best a meaningless and at worst a dangerous exercise in authority. This study seeks what General Sir John Hackett calls the "reasons of constant validity"<sup>7</sup> in the military profession. It seeks to examine how the professional officer learns what should be done in

an environment that includes personal, professional, constitutional, and, at times, governmental motivations. It seeks a common denominator of Duty for the professional officer.

There is more than enough information available for the student of Duty. Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Kant--each of the moral philosophers has at one time or another commented on the "force of obligation" that the individual feels and that results in a concept of Duty. This study, however, will not consciously pursue the moral significance of Duty as its focus, though the moral implications of Duty in the military profession are virtually inescapable. Nor will it try to explore the demography of the officer corps prior to entry on active duty as a factor in the development of a Duty concept. Morris Janowitz does this in The Professional Soldier, and though the officer's background certainly affects his development of a Duty concept, this study is interested only in what happens to him once he enters the Army.

Chapter 2 will focus, therefore, on commentary by and about professional military officers and their profession in books, professional journals, and magazines. It will conclude with an extended definition of Duty synthesized from the major ideas presented in the literature surveyed.

Chapter 3 will consider the role of the schoolhouse as a major factor in the development of the officer's concept of Duty. It will examine programs of instruction within the military education system from precommissioning through the War College to determine the objectives and methodology of the Army's Duty-related ethics instruction.

Chapter 4 will compare the professional officer's formal military education experience described in chapter 3 with the definition of Duty gleaned from the survey of literature in chapter 2 and decide if the Army promotes within its schoolhouses the clear and concise concept of Duty that today's professional officer needs.

Chapter 5 will summarize the study, comment on the implications of the study for other areas where the professional officer gains an understanding of Duty, and offer suggestions for further work on the topic of Duty.

Much work has been done on the topic of Duty; much more remains. Henry David Thoreau had this to say about the importance of Duty in the fiber of American character:



Raise your child so that he will make himself do what he knows has to be done when it should be done whether he likes it or not. It is the first lesson that ought be learned, and, however early a man's training begins, it is the most important and probably the last lesson he will need.\*

Just how difficult this lesson is to teach, to understand, and to practice in the military profession will become evident in the pages ahead.

ENDNOTES  
CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon, (1929): 192.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State, (1957): 8.

<sup>3</sup> Walter F. Ulmer, "Leaders, Managers, and Command Climate," (1983): 55.

<sup>4</sup> Huntington, 11.

<sup>5</sup> General Sir John Hackett, The Profession of Arms, (1983): 139.

<sup>6</sup> Department of the Army, FM 100-1, (1986): 22.

<sup>7</sup> Hackett, 145.

<sup>8</sup> Henry David Thoreau, Walden and Civil Disobedience, (1966): 248.

## Chapter Two

### The Literature of Duty

In the late 1970s, author Tom Wolfe wrote of a special quality he had observed in military test pilots, a quality that so defied definition he finally described it simply as "the right stuff." Though this "right stuff" may have been beyond definition, Wolfe insisted that it was recognizable: "A man either had it or he didn't! There was no such thing as having most of it."<sup>1</sup> The study of Duty presents the same challenge; Duty seems beyond definition yet recognizable in those who possess it. Duty is part of the Army Ethic described in FM 100-1, yet most officers will admit that they do not fully understand it.

The 1978 Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO) cites the clear articulation of goals for the officer corps as the Army's most urgent educational need: "the Army must be more clear to its young officers in stating what a military professional in their era should know, should be able to do, and should believe."<sup>2</sup> Certainly no less important than goals, the values of the profession must also

be clear to the officer; the Army must make the young officer's Duty clear to him. This is not a requirement unique to our age. Milton warned of the alternative to clearly articulated values over three hundred years ago: "When we can't measure the things that are important, we ascribe importance to the things we can measure."<sup>3</sup>

It is toward this purpose--measuring Duty--that Chapter Two begins. What follows are the results of a search of literature for a common thread of Duty.

"A Proposal for the United States Army Ethic," Hugh Kelley.

To begin the search for an understanding of Duty any place other than the Officer's Oath of Office and the Preamble to the United States Constitution is to misunderstand the nature of the profession from the start. All other ideas about Duty are ancillary to the essential elements of an officer's Duty presented in these documents.

Hugh Kelley brings together the Oath, the Preamble, and Title X of the United States Code to build an argument for a formal Army Ethic. Though his proposal and the argument

which support it are much broader than this search for a definition of Duty, Kelley's work is a good place to find these three documents printed together.

In the Oath of Office, the officer swears to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States."<sup>4</sup> The promise to "defend" the Constitution is clear enough; the promise to "support" the Constitution is much less clear. Few Americans really understand the Constitution; professional officers are no exception. The Constitution is revered because it has preserved the democratic system in America for over two hundred years, but most Americans would find it difficult to explain how it has performed such a feat.

The Preamble of the Constitution outlines the purpose of the Constitution and gives some insight on the nature of this document the officer has sworn to support. Through the Constitution, the American people seek "to form a more perfect Union...provide for the common defense...and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."<sup>5</sup> Explicit in these words, the officer finds that it is his Duty to defend the United States. Implicit in these words--as this study understands them--the officer agrees to place the defense of the United States before his own welfare, to contribute to unity within the nation, and to seek

increasingly more "perfect" service to the United States and its people. This last point requires amplification.

The framers of the Constitution knew--and indeed hoped--that those who followed would improve upon their efforts; they set a mark on the wall, and in the Preamble encouraged others to reach for it. For those who swear to "support" the Constitution of the United States, merely getting the job done is insufficient; the Constitution demands an attempt at private excellence, a theme that will recur in this search for a definition of Duty. To borrow a phrase from Will Rogers, the officer who swears allegiance to the Constitution agrees to "leave the woodpile a little higher than he found it."

Title X further clarifies Duty's equation. Section 3062 of Title X charges the Army and its members with "supporting the national policies."<sup>6</sup> This is very different from simply supporting the Constitution. National policies change with the political tides; in Title X, the officer discovers that it is his Duty to support the duly-constituted government as it shapes national policy. He finds that it is his Duty to accept civilian control of the military. Even at this level of abstraction it is easy to imagine the potential for conflicting Duties when professional, governmental, and historical ideologies

collide. Nevertheless, unless the elected government exceeds its constitutional power, an officer must support its policies. It is his Duty.

Field Manual 100-1: The Army.

According to FM 100-1, the professional Army Ethic includes four institutional values (Loyalty, Duty, Selfless Service, and Integrity) and four individual values (Commitment, Competence, Candor, and Courage). The Army defines Duty as follows:

Duty is obedience and disciplined performance, despite difficulty or danger. It is doing what should be done when it should be done. Duty is a personal act of responsibility manifested by accomplishing all assigned tasks to the fullest of one's capability, meeting all commitments, and exploiting opportunities to improve oneself for the good of the group.<sup>7</sup>

This definition points out the problem in defining Duty: the longer definitions of Duty become, the more they tend to draw other values into them. For example, FM 100-1

makes a distinction between Duty and Selflessness. Yet, in the definition of Duty above, the officer is encouraged to accomplish his assigned tasks and exploit opportunities for self-improvement "for the good of the group." If there is a distinction between Duty and Selflessness here, it is very fine indeed. This suggests that Selflessness may not be a separate value within the Army Ethic at all; it may be better expressed as an imperative of Duty.

In any case, the Army Ethic described in FM 100-1 is a good framework within which to build the understanding of Duty this study seeks.

#### The Professional Soldier, Morris Janowitz.

In 1971, Janowitz described a professional officer in search of a new self-conception. The post-Vietnam Army, he predicted, would be an Army characterized by competition within the officer corps among the traditional heroic leader, the military manager, and the emerging military technologist. As the gap in expertise between civilian and military specialties narrowed, and as weapons of mass destruction "socialized danger" among soldiers and civilians alike, the officer corps would lose much of its distinctiveness, its separateness, and, as a result,



much of its self-esteem. The growth of the military into "a vast managerial enterprise with political responsibilities" would "civilianize" the military profession and strain the traditional military self-image.\* Through all of this, the officer corps would be faced with "a conflict of constitutional ideologies and governmental loyalties" which, unresolved, would "divide the officer corps and superimpose political considerations and values upon military considerations and values."<sup>9</sup>

To counter these trends, Janowitz argues for an officer corps "trained in the meaning of civilian supremacy"<sup>10</sup> and capable of "shifting from one role to another with ease,"<sup>11</sup> characteristics which traditionally are more representative of society than the military profession. But professional officers have never been fully at ease with the notion of "representativeness"; most consider themselves the "standard bearers and conservators of great traditions in changing social environments."<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Janowitz describes a professional officer increasingly representative of society.

Potentially conflicting duties fill the pages of The Professional Soldier. The officer must reconcile the competing interests of heroic leader, military manager, and military technologist and, when called upon to do so, serve in each role; he must be prepared to act as a political

agent, balancing absolutist theory (there is no substitute for victory) with pragmatic theory (war as instrument of policy); he must acknowledge his representativeness and almost simultaneously seek to overcome it by aspiring to some higher standard of behavior.

Though written in 1971, The Professional Soldier seems written for the 1980s. It demands that the professional officer examine the purpose of his profession. More important, it insists that he look beyond the confines of his profession to consider the realities of both national and international politics. Morris Janowitz defines the professional officer and challenges him to accept a changing role. This new role includes the traditional responsibilities of the professional officer outlined in the Constitution and the Oath of Office. Beyond these traditional responsibilities, however, this new role also demands that the officer understand how the military fits into the political arena as an increasingly important aspect of his Duty.

The Soldier and the State, Samuel P. Huntington.

If Janowitz defines the professional officer, Huntington defines his profession. For thirty years, The

Soldier and the State has been the starting point for any study of the motivations, pressures, and values of the military profession.

Each aspect of Huntington's time-honored definition of professionalism--expertise, responsibility, corporateness--influences the professional officer's concept of Duty; each requires something of him: skill in the management of violence, service to the state, and unity with the professional body.<sup>13</sup> This last aspect of the profession--corporateness--he develops most fully.

Huntington speaks of the development of weltanschauung, the professional mind. He points out that while some of the officer's relationship with society and the state is spelled out in law, to a larger extent the "officer's code is expressed in custom, tradition, and the continuing spirit of the profession."<sup>14</sup>

Huntington explores this "spirit of the profession" in great detail. He describes the military ethic as "corporate in spirit...and fundamentally anti-individualistic."<sup>15</sup> He considers an officer's sense of responsibility to his profession a powerful--perhaps the most powerful--influence in his life. For example, he contends that it is the "spirit of the profession," and not legislation, that

guarantees the principle of civilian control of the military in this country: "Only if they are motivated by military ideals will the armed forces be the obedient servants of the state and will civilian control be assured."<sup>16</sup>

The potential power of the military profession carries with it great responsibility. The officer must balance power, profession, and ideology.<sup>17</sup> Huntington cautions that in a pluralistic society, power is always purchased for a price, and "the price which the military has to pay for power depends upon the extent of the gap between the military ethic and the prevailing ideologies of the society."<sup>18</sup> He insists that though the power of military leaders reached unprecedented heights in World War II, they reached those heights only by "sacrificing their military outlook."<sup>19</sup> In the separateness of this "military outlook," Huntington sees something of great value, something imperative, something essential to the formulation of state policy in a democracy: "The prime deficiency in the conduct of World War II was, therefore, the insufficient representation of the military viewpoint in the formulation of national strategy."<sup>20</sup> This military viewpoint and the profession which nurtures it must be preserved.

From Huntington, the professional officer learns, among other things, that he must hate war and avoid politics.

Forced into either, his profession and its values must be his guides. According to The Soldier and the State, the officer's concept of Duty begins with the Duty the officer owes to his profession.

The Professional Officer in a Changing Society.

Sam C. Sarkesian

Huntington and Janowitz agree that the professional officer is unique in society and encourage him to maintain a certain separateness (while remaining aware of his surroundings) from the power struggle of the pluralistic political system. Sarkesian begins with a much different premise: "the professional military man is, in the main, not much different from all other men."<sup>21</sup>

Sarkesian's paradigm of a profession has four major characteristics: organizational structure, special knowledge, self-regulation, and calling and commitment.<sup>22</sup> Among his duties, the professional must embrace the ideals of the profession, "ensure that they exist throughout the profession...and articulate these ideals to the rest of society."<sup>23</sup> If these ideals are to be meaningful to the profession, those who enter the profession must be

"motivated by a sense of responsibility to society...and be seeking something other than material reward."<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps most important, the professional must have the moral courage to insist on compliance with these ideals within the profession. This last point applies to small matters as well as large, in peace and in war. Sarkesian illustrates this by recalling Admiral Stansfield Turner who, when he became commandant of the Naval War College, could discover no student "in recent years who had flunked out...for academic indifference or incompetence. This, he decided, was either an amazing record or a false concept...that can only foster intellectual laziness."<sup>25</sup> Situations like the one Admiral Turner discovered occur when moral courage is lacking and when professions become fraternal organizations instead of groups of individuals dedicated to a common ideal.

The Professional Army Officer in a Changing Society calls for a redefinition of military professionalism: "usually an organization is created to perform one particular function. When that function is no longer needed, the organization faces a major crisis."<sup>26</sup> Sarkesian takes Janowitz's contention that the professional officer is becoming increasingly civilianized, couples it with his own belief that major global war has become unthinkable, and

concludes that the military profession must "search for meaningful roles in community service in a peacetime environment."<sup>27</sup> He argues that "professional military and civic-action roles are not mutually exclusive" and that the search for a new identity might "perpetuate a spirit of inquiry, unlimited by parochial military boundaries."<sup>28</sup>

Sarkesian's disdain for parochialism among the services is valid; his suggestion that the military re-focus its reason for being seems contrary to the imperatives outlined in Title X and in the Constitution. Moreover, his suggestion responds to a near-term political situation and fails to consider the "vision," the timelessness of the military's place in the balance created by the Constitution. It seems clear to this study that the military's focus must remain fixed on war as the best way to insure peace; the professional officer's Duty is to prepare for war.

Despite the exception this study takes to the role Sarkesian assigns the military in American society, his contribution to the professional officer's understanding of Duty is considerable: the officer's Duty is to understand and embrace the values of his profession, articulate those values both to other members of the profession and to society, to serve society, and to perform this service with moral courage.

The Profession of Arms, General Sir John Hackett.

Many authors are reluctant to describe the military profession as a "calling." General Sir John Hackett does so at every opportunity: "Service under arms is a calling resembling that of the priesthood in its dedication....it is also very widely regarded as a profession...and, here and there, less happily, as no more than an occupation."<sup>29</sup> To Hackett, in stark contrast to Sarkesian, the "unlimited liability clause in a soldier's contract" sets him apart from others in society.<sup>30</sup> The subordination of self interest among soldiers intensifies their capacity for virtue. The soldier lives life, as someone once described it, with the volume turned up.

The virtues of the professional soldier are not unique to the military; however, virtue does manifest itself more vividly in the professional soldier. In contrast to the mass of men, the soldier's virtues are tested. This creates a separateness between the soldier and other men, and this separateness is essential to the military profession. General Hackett fears the day when the threshold between the civil and military ways of life might come together:



"Will the military life lose something important if we try to bring about its total disappearance?"<sup>31</sup> General Hackett's answer is an unequivocal "yes."

The professional military officer's life must be focused and directed toward the preparation for war, and that focus must include:

1. acceptance of the inevitability of conflict
2. belief in the unchanging nature of man
3. belief in the certainty of war

Hackett's argument is simple and eloquent. If the officer fails to prepare for war, he will not be prepared to avoid war: "The purpose of the profession of arms is not to win wars but avoid them. This will almost certainly demand the taking of deliberate decisions to fight...by embarking on timely warfare to lessen the risk of general war."<sup>32</sup>

Harold Lasswell defined the officer's role as "the management of violence"; Hackett finds the "containment of violence" more precise.

General Sir John Hackett displays an obvious enthusiasm for the profession of arms, but he is not enamored of war. He considers Mussolini's contention that "war alone brings all human energies to their highest tension and sets a seal of nobility on the peoples who have the virtue to face it"

pure rubbish. Instead, he sees in the preparation for war a potential for sacrifice and virtue that can ennoble man:

"War does not ennoble...the preparation of men to fight in it almost certainly can and very often does."<sup>33</sup>

While Hackett applauds the selflessness of the military profession, he reserves his highest accolades for the officer who routinely seeks excellence in the performance of his Duty: "The performance of public Duty is not the whole of what makes a good life, there is also the pursuit of private excellence."<sup>34</sup> Part of this private excellence is the constant pursuit of knowledge about the profession and about war, knowledge that is increasingly important as modern military leadership places "heavy demands on the young officer who has to be made to remember that only a person of liberal mind is entitled to exercise coercion over others in a society of free men."<sup>35</sup>

General Sir John Hackett contributes to the definition of Duty in two ways. He fixes the focus of the professional officer firmly on the preparation for war. And he argues for an intensity of effort, a drive for private excellence, that inspires the officer in everything from education to the development of combat skills.

Study On Military Professionalism, U.S. Army War College

Ironically, most works that scrutinize the ethical climate of the military profession are written by men and women outside of the profession. The work produced within the Army that is cited most often in writings about the military profession and military ethics is the War College Study On Military Professionalism published in 1970. This study noted a significant difference between the ideals of professional military ethics and the actual professional climate as it existed within the Army in the late 1960s. More significant to works on military ethics that came after it, the War College Study declared that the unhealthy ethical climate was not self-correcting and established a strong correlation between ethical conduct and military competence.

The War College Study covers a wide range of ethical issues. It contributes to the understanding of the professional officer's concept of Duty in several important ways.

The officers surveyed as part of the War College Study were very nearly unanimous in their disdain for "selfish behavior that places personal success ahead of the good of the service" and for those who "look upward to please

superiors instead of looking downward to fulfill the legitimate needs of subordinates."<sup>36</sup> Many officers blamed "the system" and senior officers for the apparent tendency among the leadership of the Army to equate success with measurable output. Young officers complained of "oversupervision," "acceptance of substandard performance," and "ticket-punching."<sup>37</sup> Though its authors did not consider their data exclusively in terms of its impact on the officer's concept of Duty, the recurring dissatisfactions evident in the War College Study are invaluable in determining how officers in the late 1960s felt about Duty and its performance.

Though greeted with some controversy, the War College Study was not looking for a major overhaul in the Army; it sought a refinement of what Huntington called "the spirit of the profession." The Study discussed the need for an Army where officers were interested in their own personal success and at the same time genuinely concerned for their subordinates; an Army where officers wanted to do well in their jobs not because of what it would mean to them in the future, but what it would mean to the Army in the present; an Army where officers would risk a poor showing to develop their subordinates; an Army that would not tolerate mediocrity and substandard performance.

The War College Study proposed an officer's creed. The words of the creed respond to the demands of the officer corps for a focus to their professional life in the world of 1970. The words of the creed also outline, in part at least, a concept of Duty: "selfless performance...best effort...knowledge of profession...physical and moral courage...inspiration to others...loyalty to the United States."<sup>38</sup> To the respondents of the War College Study, these are every officer's Duty. They seem more than appropriate for consideration today as well.

#### A Review of Education and Training for Officers.

Department of the Army.

In 1978, the Army conducted a study aimed at redefining the goals of the military education system. In the chapter on ethics, the authors conceded that they faced the greatest difficulty in establishing goals for professional education in deciding what the product of that education--the professional officer--should be. At the end of the chapter, RETO's authors decided that they failed to define adequately what an officer should be because they had to "fall back on Duty-Honor-Country as encompassing the answer."<sup>39</sup> Perhaps they did not fail at all!

RETO rephrases some already familiar themes in its discussion of education and ethics. Although during periods of prolonged peace it may be forgotten, war is still the business of the profession of arms. Professional officers must "use peacetime to prepare themselves for war...becoming accomplished in a little-practiced art."<sup>40</sup> Officers must never become complacent about their knowledge and skill in the profession since their "present command of knowledge and skills will not satisfy future demands, nor will each officer's present capabilities for forming insights, testing value, and making judgments about military dilemmas."<sup>41</sup> On this point, RETO echoes the thoughts of Martin Blumenson who, speaking about education and professionalism, insisted that "to attain professional status is not the same as retaining it."<sup>42</sup>

Not surprisingly in a study about education, RETO accords to Knowledge a special significance in the profession of arms, a profession where judgment is among the most important commodities. The officer who takes his men into battle without first having done all he can to prepare himself to make the decisions he will have to make has clearly failed in his Duty. To the military officer as to the medical doctor, constant improvement in the knowledge and skills of the profession is a Duty.

RETO also contains an interesting discussion of commitment, a discussion that decides "it is neither feasible nor necessary that all Army officers be committed to their service."<sup>43</sup> RETO's authors recognized the implications of this statement: "education and training without commitment may not be worth the investment; commitment without education and training may not be worth the risk."<sup>44</sup> This has implications in the consideration of Duty as well.

Another author, LTC Zeb Bradford explains the distinction between commitment and Duty this way: "commitment implies less than Duty....commitment may indicate what one must do in terms of a consciously made obligation....A sense of Duty is a feeling of what one ought to do and must do in terms of one's values."<sup>45</sup> By this definition, it is only when the officer accepts the profession as a calling--when the profession's values become his values--that a Duty concept can be fully realized. Duty is not something bestowed upon the officer at commissioning; it is dynamic, a goal toward which he reaches throughout his career.

According to RETO, the inculcation of any professional value involves a socialization process, a gradual

understanding and acceptance of the professional value in stages. The three stages of socialization include:

1. Rebellion, characterized by rejection of professional values.
2. Creative Individualism, characterized by acceptance of pivotal values.
3. Conformity, characterized by acceptance of all values.<sup>46</sup>

RETO contends that, ideally, the Army should seek to maintain officers at the second stage and "strive to avoid evoking total rejection by the individual officer, on the one hand, and... rewarding only conformity on the other."<sup>47</sup>

From this Review of Education and Training, the officer should begin to sense the balance necessary in his professional life. He should begin to sense the need for balance between selflessness and individualism, a balance perhaps best described by the word Duty.

#### The Challenge of Command, Roger H. Nye.

Roger Nye describes life as "a succession of choices about conflicting duties."<sup>48</sup> He, too, is interested in the difference between commitment and Duty.



In 1984, two Washington study groups prepared statements of philosophy for the Army and never once mentioned the word Duty. Instead, Nye explains, "they wrote of commitment, selfless service, loyalty, and candor."<sup>49</sup> The word Duty had been abandoned because "the old traditional concepts were too difficult to be taught and grasped by young people from contemporary American society."<sup>50</sup>

Nye's analysis of the distinction between commitment and Duty centers around the importance of self, around the importance of the individual in the shared human experience that is the military profession. Commitment implies "giving over one's will to the cause"; Duty implies "that the individual should determine the nature and extent of his obligation."<sup>51</sup> The author regrets the deemphasis of Duty in Army publications. The "old philosophy," with its appreciation for the importance of the individual "breathed creativity into Army life."<sup>52</sup> Nye's argument for a renewed emphasis on Duty is persuasive. He uses Dwight D. Eisenhower as an example of a Duty concept rightly defined.

Eisenhower considered Duty the guiding light of the professional officer. He established three criteria for those who would pursue the "star of Duty":

1. an ingrained desire to do the right thing
2. determination to uphold principles that he had adopted for himself
3. awareness that one has many duties which may often be in conflict."<sup>3</sup>

Self is a necessary ingredient in Eisenhower's equation of Duty; it must remain part of the equation today as well.

Most military analysts consider it a great strength of the professional officer corps that no two officers are alike. This study believes that "self," and its influence on the officer's understanding of Duty, is what makes this true. For the professional officer, a career is a personal search for the best way to perform his Duty.

#### Professional Development of Officers Study.

##### Department of the Army

The Professional Development of Officers Study (PDOS) was a 1985 update of the 1978 RETO Study. It set out to assess officer professional development as it had evolved since the 1978 Study. It decided that not much had changed.

PDOS discovered that despite the recommendations of RETO, the Army education system continued to "allocate the

majority of time to teaching highly perishable data and information and insufficient amounts of time to increasing cognitive ability, decision making skills, or in expanding an officer's frame of reference."<sup>54</sup> This 1985 study concluded that the professional development of officers is dominated by training; very little time is allocated for the education of the officer.

Among those values addressed by PDOS that affect a definition of Duty, selflessness receives significant attention. Professional officers "exhibit selfless service to the Army and the Nation in all of their actions so as to ensure that they accomplish their responsibilities."<sup>55</sup> Interesting in this quotation is the distinction between service to the Army and service to the Nation. PDOS admits what many publications merely gloss over--that the interests of the Army and the interests of the nation may at times be in conflict. PDOS stops short of recommending how the officer is to resolve the conflict when it occurs but considers selflessness "fundamental" in any case.

Fundamental, too, is the officer's role as teacher: "Officers personally adopt, model, and instill in their subordinates the values that form the basis for a distinct lifestyle and code of behavior" in the military profession.<sup>56</sup> The officer is charged to "personally care

for subordinates and accept the responsibility for ensuring their welfare while imbuing them with the values, knowledge, and skills of the profession of arms."<sup>57</sup> If the word "imbue" was as carefully chosen as it should have been, the officer's role as a teacher must be considered very important, so important that it takes on the binding quality of a Duty: "Every officer...has the fundamental responsibility to develop subordinates."<sup>58</sup>

In order to accomplish this "fundamental responsibility" to develop subordinates, every officer must himself be a student of his profession. Officers must "expand their cognitive skills which foster innovative and creative thinking while retaining their ability to take bold and decisive action."<sup>59</sup> The goal of PDOS is to produce officers who know how to think rather than what to think. For the officer's part, he must see it as his responsibility to continue his education throughout his career. PDOS is clear on this: "A life-style of lifelong education is a must. An officer must be expected to study, not allowed to."<sup>60</sup> The pursuit of knowledge and the sharing of that knowledge with subordinates are more than effective techniques of leadership; to the authors of PDOS, they are every officer's Duty.

In contradiction of RETO, PDOS considers "commitment by officers to professionalism crucial."<sup>61</sup> The definition of commitment used by the authors of PDOS includes ideas that might serve a definition of Duty equally well: "a strong desire to remain a part of the Army; a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the Army; a definite belief in and acceptance of the basic values and goals of the Army while still being willing to criticize; a deep concern about the fate of the Army."<sup>62</sup>

The relationship between commitment and Duty is unclear in PDOS. The officer's Duty to develop his subordinates and constantly to improve himself could not be more clear.

"An Objectively Derived Foundation for Military Values,"

Linda M. Ewing

Linda Ewing sets out to "provide a measurement of conformity to the shared values of a profession whose foundation of special trust and confidence rests upon those values."<sup>63</sup> In the process of deciding how to best measure conformity to shared values, she contributes to the definition of Duty.

According to Ewing, society "demands that individuals involved in certain activities be held to a higher standard of behavior than other people."<sup>64</sup> The military profession is among these activities held to a higher standard. As a result, individuals within the profession must regard their "activity" as a calling, accept its values, and monitor both their own standards of behavior and the standards of behavior displayed by other members of the profession.<sup>65</sup> These are the elements of professionalism upon which Ewing bases her measure of conformity.

This study has already cited others who have commented on the elements of professionalism. Ewing, however, is the first in this study to charge professionals not only with practicing "good actions" themselves and encouraging good character in subordinates, but she also insists that individuals within the profession are responsible for evaluating and, if necessary, correcting the ethical conduct of other members. She insists that the profession must be self-correcting: when conduct contrary to professional standards of behavior is evident, "the organization must take corrective action. The final value analysis...belongs to the institution."<sup>66</sup> Ideally, professionals will not hesitate to correct deviation from acceptable ethical standards; in practice, however, criticism of ethical conduct requires a great deal of moral courage.

Ewing describes an ethical system with four components: teaching, developing, practicing, and evaluating.<sup>67</sup> Each of these requires something of the professional officer. The officer must be both a teacher of others within the profession and a student of the profession himself. He must actively practice the ethics of his profession. His must be a life following, as Eisenhower described it, a star of Duty. Finally, the officer must have the moral courage to make the tough decisions that inevitably come in evaluating ethical behavior.

In measuring conformity to standards, Ewing uses the principle of moderation from Nichomachean Ethics: "the virtuous person is one who avoids extremes in applying a value."<sup>68</sup> This principle is also useful in the definition of values. Courage, for example, is a value; however, cowardice (a lack of courage) and rashness (an excess of courage) are not. Similarly, a lack of concern for Duty may lead to a military profession without direction; an excess of concern for Duty--of the sort evident during World War II in Germany and Japan--may lead to a profession dangerous both to itself and to the Nation.

It is an easy matter to tell the professional officer that he must moderate his concept of Duty. It is quite

another matter to tell him to do so while at the same time telling him to strive for personal excellence in the performance of his Duty. Yet that is what the military profession demands, a balance between self and selflessness. In the oath of office, competence becomes the officer's Duty: "I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office I am about to enter."<sup>69</sup> The officer's oath places a qualitative requirement on the officer.

Linda Ewing argues persuasively for the objective foundation of values in the military profession. She contributes to an understanding of Duty by reminding the officer of his Duty to live to a higher standard, exhibit moral courage, function as both teacher and student within the profession, seek moderation, and strive for personal excellence.

"The Sublimest Word Is Duty," MG A.S. Newman.

Part of the effort to understand Duty should include a look at the actions of one who led a life characterized by a high concept of Duty. This article from Army Magazine looks at Duty in the person of General John J. Pershing.



Biographer Robert Lee Bullard described Pershing as a man "plain in word, sane and direct in action, who applied himself to duty and all work with a manifest purpose."<sup>70</sup> Pershing lived his life with a sense of purpose, a focus, an intensity that ought to be part of every officer's feeling for his profession.

Pershing worked hard at every task assigned him, large or small, the obviously crucial or the seemingly insignificant. For example, Pershing agonized over the study of French at West Point, yet when assigned to the frontier after graduation, "devoted himself to learning the Indian dialects...a task very few officers assumed as a duty obligation." General Newman, author of the article, sees this drive for personal excellence as every officer's Duty: "duty calls for your best in everything."<sup>71</sup>

General Newman also describes Pershing as a man of great personal courage, both physical and moral. In the Spanish-American War, Pershing conducted himself "in a most gallant and efficient manner." A fellow officer described him as "the coolest man under fire I ever saw." More impressive was his capacity for moral courage, often the more difficult form of courage. According to Elihu Root, "Pershing was the rare officer who could carry out a directive and assume responsibility without passing the

buck."<sup>72</sup> These words are high praise to be sure, but all officers should have the moral courage to accept responsibility; Root's words must be considered an indictment of the officer corps in the early twentieth century, a warning to the officer corps today, and an injunction to include moral courage in any definition of Duty.

Pershing's concern for his subordinates is well documented. Once again, Newman considers that this should not be the exception but the rule: "One vital requirement of Duty is loyalty to subordinates."<sup>73</sup>

The final characteristic of Duty evidenced in Pershing's career Newman explains this way: "Pershing's unmatched career can be thus summed up in three words--Duty in action--and there is no better guideline for young leaders in our troubled world today."<sup>74</sup> It is not enough to talk about Duty; the officer must live it.

"Beyond Duty, Honor, Country," Lewis Sorley.

Lewis Sorley provides the final perspective necessary before this study attempts its definition of Duty. He believes that professional officers generally make the

proper choice in cases where a decision is either clearly right or clearly wrong: "Seldom is there disagreement over the rightness or wrongness of actions directly contrary to the generally understood ethical code of the officer corps."<sup>75</sup> According to Sorley, the greatest challenge to the ethical conduct of the officer is the resolution of competing "goods," the necessity of resolving a conflict between competing duties. The officer must prepare himself to make these kind of judgments, judgments he will surely face during his professional life; it is his Duty.

Like others cited in this study, Sorley places a high premium on the education of the professional officer. "Nonpredetermined conflicts," he writes, are resolved only with "informed individual judgment."<sup>76</sup> The most important words in Sorley's phrase are "informed" and "individual." It is the officer's Duty to remain informed--educated--in the skills and ethics of his profession. It is also his Duty to apply his own unique perspective to the decision-making process; that is, "self" must be part of the process.

Knowing what to do is only half of the process. The officer must have the courage to put his decisions into action. Sorley seeks professional officers who "deal directly" with problems.<sup>77</sup> He also seeks officers with the courage to stand by their decisions. For example, he

contends that a large part of an officer's responsibility is prioritizing tasks for subordinates. Even prioritizing "requires some moral courage, for the time will come when someone higher up will ask...about an area in which the unit has not done well or has done nothing on purpose, as a result of having assigned a low priority to that function."<sup>70</sup>

According to Lewis Sorley, the officer who understands Duty is prepared to make ethically sound judgments because he is informed about his profession; and he is prepared to act on his judgment because he has developed the moral courage to do so. The pursuit of knowledge and the moral courage to use it are every officer's Duty.

#### CONCLUSION: A Definition of Duty

"To know a man, you must understand his memories"  
(Chinese Proverb)

At several points during this chapter, it seemed impossible to keep separate the elements of Duty, Leadership, and Professionalism. As a result, it may seem that this chapter is less a search for a definition of Duty

than a search for an understanding of the military profession. Such is the nature of the problem. Duty can be understood only in the context of the profession it serves.

However, there are a number of common themes in the literature surveyed that begin to define what the military profession expects of its officers. These expectations are so important to the profession, so binding upon its members, that they function as imperatives in the concept of Duty. Duty, as every professional officer should understand it, includes these five imperatives:

1. defense of the United States
2. support of the duly-constituted government of the United States in the performance of its constitutional duties
3. dedication to the military profession expressed by the life-long pursuit of knowledge (the development of judgment) and the life-long pursuit of personal excellence (the development of self)
4. selflessness
5. courage

These imperatives form the "what ought to be done" alluded to in the definition of Duty as it currently appears in FM 100-1.

Yet, from the survey of literature, it is also clear that not all officers agree on the importance of Duty in the Army Ethic. For example, in 1977 LTC Melville A. Drisko reported that although 73% of the officer corps considered Duty "acceptable" as part of a code of professional military ethics, only 37% considered it effective.<sup>79</sup> The Army's response to this expression of doubt about the effectiveness of Duty within the Army Ethic was to dissect it. Values that were once generally understood as part of the concept of Duty were separated from it and elevated to equal status. This was intended to clarify the officer's Duty for him; in the opinion of this study, it has had the opposite effect.

This study contends that, within the Army Ethic, Duty embodies the five imperatives derived from the survey of literature. If there is difficulty in understanding this, it is not because the word Duty is inadequate but because the Army's effort to articulate to the officer corps what it means by Duty is inadequate. The remainder of this chapter seeks to bring the true definition of Duty into sharper focus.

Although there is little unanimity in the study of ethics, nearly everyone agrees that to "defend" the United States and its Constitution, the Army's Duty is to prepare for war. This will ever remain the officer's most important Duty. "Support" for the Constitution, as it is appropriately phrased in the ritual of the officer's Oath, is more clearly and accurately stated in a definition of Duty as "support of the duly-constituted government in the performance of its Constitutional duties." This wording reaffirms the primacy of the Constitution in the officer's professional life and, at the same time, reminds the officer that the government of the United States is the flesh and blood manifestation of the Constitution.

Selflessness and Courage are separate values according to FM 100-1. This study contends that they are subordinate to the larger professional ethic: Duty. Since, as Huntington explains, the target of a professional ethic is the "spirit of the profession," the Army does more harm than good and creates more confusion than clarity by diluting the impact of the word Duty. The whole, in this case, is greater than the sum of its parts.

It is wrong, therefore, to consider selflessness separate from Duty. Duty, as the readings have established, demands the officer's active participation in the

profession. The importance of "self" in the relationship between the officer and his profession is apparent in the words the profession uses to describe a leader, words like self-confident, self-disciplined, and self-starter. Moreover, the Preamble to the Constitution encourages Americans to seek a "more perfect union." That more perfect union will be achieved, and the military profession will find better ways of fulfilling its many missions, only if each individual brings his unique perspective--his "self"--to the profession.

At the same time, the nature of the military profession demands selflessness, the willingness to sacrifice selfish interests for another good. But this should not be confused with self-abnegation; there must be room for personal ambition within bounds. To consider selflessness a separate value in a statement of ethics is misleading. Selflessness only makes sense in the broader context of Duty. This study believes that selflessness is the Duty of every officer, that "self" in the sense described above is also the Duty of every officer, and that "self" and "selflessness" are joined in the concept of Duty.

Similarly, it might seem unreasonable to tell the officer that it is his Duty to have courage. On the other hand, in a profession with such enormous responsibilities,



the officer must have both physical, and, perhaps more important, moral courage. In a very well-written pamphlet on Generalship, J.F.C. Fuller called courage "the pivotal moral virtue."<sup>20</sup> In fact, in the readings there seems to be correlation between the acquisition of rank and the need for courage: the greater an officer's rank, the greater his need for courage. For Duty to matter it must be Duty-in-Action; for Duty-in-Action to occur requires courage. The Army cannot survive unless the men who lead it do so with courage, both physical and moral, in peace and in war. Therefore, courage is not only an individual value as FM 100-1 suggests, it is also an institutional value. Courage must be part of an officer's concept of Duty.

It might also seem unreasonable for the concept of Duty to demand that the officer pursue a lifetime of study. In the past, the Army has been reluctant to make this demand on the officer, relying instead on periodic professional schooling. However, the authors cited in the first part of this chapter argue correctly that the Army needs an active Duty concept--once again, Duty in action--and that the Army must rely on the individual officer to be a self-starter. They insist that the professional officer must be able to act "in the absence of external cues."<sup>21</sup> This is undoubtedly true, but the officer will be able to act without external cues only if he is experienced in the

skills and ethics of his profession. Today's Army cannot survive without men of experience acting independently with good judgment. It is surely the officer's Duty, then, to gain experience. Education and study are the means to acquire vicarious experience and so must be considered every officer's Duty.

Without question, there is also a qualitative aspect of Duty. Writing of Ulysses S. Grant, General S.L.A. Marshall praised him for "executing every small detail well."<sup>2</sup> In his oath, the officer agrees to serve "well." Although only the individual officer knows how "well" he is using his talents in the service of his country, the profession demands that each officer do his best regardless of the circumstances. Long ago, Henry David Thoreau concluded that, to be meaningful, the quest for personal excellence must go on regardless of circumstances: "Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies, and not be the biggest pygmie that he can be?"<sup>3</sup> If each officer has this attitude about Duty, if each officer refuses to accept mediocrity regardless of the circumstances, it can only have the most positive of influences on the Army. On the other hand, officers who do not see personal excellence as part of their Duty will have a negative effect on the Army. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales is instructive on this point: "If gold rusts, what shall iron do?"<sup>4</sup>

The five imperatives of Duty as this study describes them must always be present in the officer's life. At times, however, certain of them will guide the officer's behavior more than others. In this way, Duty is dynamic.

Early in his career, the Duty that most concerns the officer is the Duty he feels toward his men, toward his unit, and toward his immediate circle of peers. His concept of Duty is dominated by a sense of selflessness at this point in his career.

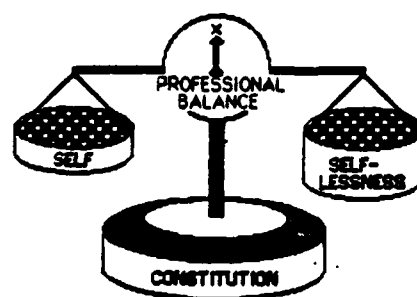
After a period of socialization and schooling, the officer begins to feel an increasing sense of Duty toward his profession. As this takes place, his concept of the profession becomes a large part of his own self-concept; he begins to believe--not blindly or without exception, but for the most part--as the profession believes. He is a part of the profession at this point, a professional, and the profession wields an enormous influence on how he views his Duty.

As he gains confidence in his abilities as a professional, the officer begins to think about how he can influence the military profession. He is no longer satisfied merely to respond to the policies of his

profession but seeks a voice in the formulation of those policies. He develops, and, if the profession is fortunate, he shares his vision of the profession. To be sure, the officer must continue to be selfless in his attitude about service; but from this point in his career self becomes an important part of his concept of Duty.

The survey of literature undertaken by this study is very clear on this one point: the influences that shape the officer's understanding of Duty will change--will gain and lose significance to him--at different times in his career.

This study proposes, therefore, that balance is an essential quality of Duty: balance among the five imperatives of Duty cited earlier; balance within each of those five imperatives of Duty; balance, most of all, between the competing demands of "self" and "selflessness." Visually, this essential quality of the professional officer's concept of Duty looks like this:



In this diagram, the relationship between self and selflessness in the officer's concept of Duty becomes clear: the greater the officer's development of self, the greater his obligation to use his skills in the selfless service of his profession. Similarly, the officer must not be satisfied merely to be selfless in the performance of Duty. Balance between self and selflessness is the optimum state of the profession.

The diagram also makes it clear that the officer's duty to the Constitution is his most important Duty. Yet, as this study noted earlier, it is the Duty of which he is least conscious in his daily life. For most officers, Duty to the Constitution is accomplished through faithful service to the profession. That is why this study portrays Duty in this way, with the Constitution as the strong base on which the concept of Duty rests but somewhat removed from the tenuous point on which the imperatives of Duty balance.

The five imperatives of Duty described in this chapter contribute to the following definition of Duty which seeks to clarify the officer's Duty for him without burdening the word beyond its capacity:

The officer's Duty is to prepare for war, to find in his professional life a balance between self and selflessness, to live a life of private excellence, action, and courage, and to support the government of the United States in the performance of its Constitutional duties.

These words, then, lie below the surface of Duty's iceberg. They clarify Duty's focus and get at the notion of balance essential to the concept of Duty. And yet they still seem inadequate, still seem less eloquent than the simple word Duty itself. That may be why Robert E. Lee called Duty "the sublimest word in the English language."

In 1907, Henry Adams described education as the task of "running order through chaos, direction through space, discipline through freedom, unity through multiplicity."<sup>as</sup> The goal of this definition of Duty is to add a bit of order, direction, and unity to the study of Duty.

Chapter three will examine how ethics in general and Duty in particular are currently taught within the military education system. This is intended to be the initial step in deciding if ethics instruction in the Army schoolhouse meets the need of the officer corps for a clear and coherent concept of Duty, a concept of Duty like the one derived from literature here in chapter two.

## ENDNOTES

### CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup> Tom Wolfe, "The Right Stuff," (1979): 110.

<sup>2</sup> Department of the Army, Review of Education and Training for Officers, (1978): III-25.

<sup>3</sup> Malham Wakin, "Ethics of Leadership" in Military Leadership, (1981): 57.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh Kelley, "A Proposal for the United States Army Ethic," (1984): 18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>7</sup> Department of the Army, FM 100-1, (1986): 22.

<sup>8</sup> Morris Janowitz, The Professional Soldier, (1971): 12.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 426.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State, (1957): 8.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 315.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 344.

<sup>21</sup> Sam C. Sarkesian, The Professional Officer in a Changing Society, (1975): 6.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>29</sup> General Sir John Hackett, The Profession of Arms, (1983): 9.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>36</sup> Department of the Army, Study on Military Professionalism, (1970): 13.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., B-31.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., C-1.

<sup>39</sup> RETO, N-1-18.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., III-2.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., III-15.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., M-1-11.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., M-1-1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 195.



46 Ibid., M-1-7.

47 Ibid.

48 Roger H. Nye, The Challenge of Command, (1986): 120.

49 Ibid., 115.

50 Ibid., 116.

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53 Ibid., 118.

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56 Ibid., 9.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid., 10.

59 Ibid., 9.

60 Ibid., 81.

61 Ibid., 40.

62 Ibid., 75.

63 Linda Ewing, "An Objectively Derived Foundation for Military Values," (1985): 15.

64 Ibid., 20.

65 Ibid., 21.

66 Ibid., 65.

67 Ibid., 57.

68 Ibid., 21.

69 Ibid., 48.

<sup>70</sup> A.S. Newman, "The Sublimest Word is Duty," (1984): 69.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Lewis Sorley, "Beyond Duty, Honor, Country," (1987): 4.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>79</sup> Melville A. Drisko, "An Analysis of Professional Military Ethics," (1977): 20.

<sup>80</sup> J.F.C. Fuller, Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure, (1936): 29.

<sup>81</sup> Robert L. Taylor, ed. Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence, (1984): 173.

<sup>82</sup> S.L.A. Marshall, The Armed Forces Officer, (1975): 43.

<sup>83</sup> Henry David Thoreau, Walden, (1966): 215.

<sup>84</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, (1985): 25.

<sup>85</sup> Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams, (1961): 12.

## Chapter Three

### The Pedagogy of Duty

"Achilles, though invulnerable, never went into  
battle but completely armed"  
(Lord Chesterfield, 1753)

When the authors of the 1978 Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO) published their findings, they noted the "exquisite tension" in the military profession between those characteristics of the Army which must change to remain current and those characteristics of the Army institution which must remain unchanged.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere is this "exquisite tension" more clear than in the study of military ethics. If the officer is to be "completely armed" for battle, he must understand the ethics of his profession.

#### AN OVERVIEW OF ARMY ETHICS INSTRUCTION

Ideally, the officer will encounter ethics instruction both in the Army schoolhouse and in his assigned unit. The Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) requires each service school to include a specified number of hours of

ethics instruction as part of its curriculum. There is no formal requirement for commanders to conduct ethics instruction in the active force, but many commanders include ethics in their officer professional development programs.

Within the schoolhouse, the study of professional ethics is included in instruction on leadership and professionalism. The Center for Army Leadership at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, ensures standardization in leadership training by publishing training objectives and lesson plans which are disseminated to schools within the military education system. The teaching methodology for leadership instruction in the Army schoolhouse includes a combination of homework readings, formal presentation of theory, case studies, and classroom discussion.

Outside of the schoolhouse, professional development programs at the unit level should continue the officer's study of ethics. The Combined Arms Training Activity at Fort Leavenworth publishes Training Circulars to assist leaders at battalion level and below in preparing ethics instruction. The recommended teaching methodology for leader development programs in the unit is discussion of case studies.

If all goes as intended, instruction in the schoolhouse and instruction in the unit complement each other. This is part of the Army's new Military Qualification Standards (MQS) program, a program fully implemented through the lieutenant level (Level II) as of this publication.

Although there are two components to the Military Qualification Standards program--instruction in the school and instruction in the unit--this chapter will consider only the school component of education in professional military ethics. The school component is backed by the force of regulations, lays the foundation upon which every officer's understanding of ethics is built, and provides the officers who will teach ethics in the active force with the background to do so. Therefore, this chapter will examine ethics instruction at each level of the officer's formal professional education, from precommissioning through the War College, to discover where Duty fits into the process of educating him in the ethics of his profession.

#### **MILITARY QUALIFICATION STANDARDS LEVEL I: Precommissioning**

At the MQS I level, the officer candidate receives twenty-four hours of leadership instruction; eight of these hours are devoted to the study of professionalism and

professional ethics. The objectives of precommissioning leadership and ethics instruction are presented to the student in a task list. Each officer candidate must demonstrate his knowledge of the material on the task list before he is commissioned. The task list for leadership instruction includes seven requirements. Three of them cover topics that might bring students to the consideration of Duty:

<u>TASK</u>	<u>REQUIREMENT</u>
I-3	Describe the four factors of leadership
I-4	Describe the eleven principles of leadership
I-5	Describe the nine competencies of leadership

Typically, the officer candidate demonstrates his proficiency at these tasks when, for example, he is able to identify all leadership principles (100% accuracy) in accordance with FM 22-100.<sup>2</sup>

The task list for professional ethics instruction at the precommissioning level includes four requirements:

- I-1        Describe the foundations,  
             characteristics, and role of the  
             profession of arms and its uniqueness
  
- I-2        Describe basic American values and how  
             they are related to the role of the Army
  
- I-3        List and describe the ideal Army values  
             (FM 100-1) and the Professional Army  
             Ethic/Soldierly Qualities (FM 22-100)
  
- I-4        Relate how the values of the profession  
             of arms serve the nation

These are the common objectives of precommissioning ethics instruction. Wherever leadership and ethics instruction for the officer candidate takes place, it is based upon these task lists.

Duty is not studied as a separate value at the precommissioning level.<sup>3</sup> However, several lessons within the ethics block of instruction touch on the imperatives of Duty described in chapter two.

For example, lesson three, a one hour class on the military profession, presents the Huntington model of professionalism. During this class, students discover that officers must "act out of a sense of calling and out of a sincere desire to fully and willingly fulfill all of our obligations."<sup>4</sup> Later classes, at lesson 21 and 22, examine this idea of obligation through consequentialist (means-ends) and deontological (moral imperative) theory. These lessons stress the importance of the profession in the officer's life and familiarize him with the tools he will need to confront the complexities of ethical decisionmaking.

The Constitution, the Oath of Office, the officer's commissioning statement, and FM 100-1--each an important source in the development of the officer's concept of Duty--are the subject of a one hour class at lesson three.

Lesson four is the last lesson in the precommissioning leadership block which deals directly with military ethics. For three hours during lesson four, students discuss leadership principles, leadership competencies, leadership imperatives, and leadership traits from FM 22-100. Though the word Duty is not mentioned in the lesson plan, the subject matter of lesson four may lead students to the discussion of Duty.



It is not the purpose of this chapter to assess the Duty-related instruction at the precommissioning level; that task will be undertaken in chapter four. Nevertheless, even a cursory look at the precommissioning leadership and ethics curriculum leaves the impression that instructors must cover an enormous amount of complex material in a very limited amount of time. And it is also noteworthy that the notion of personal excellence and the proper development of self--crucial in the concept of Duty as this study defines it--are apparently missing from precommissioning instruction.

#### MILITARY QUALIFICATION STANDARDS LEVEL II:

##### Officer Basic Course

During his officer basic course, the new lieutenant receives five hours of instruction in ethics. This instruction is divided into three lessons.

Lesson one reminds the officer that he is a member of a profession. The objective of this lesson is to "review the characteristics of a profession and describe the four characteristics of the military profession that distinguish it from other occupations or professions." Basic course instructors use Ryan and Cooper's model of the profession from Those Who Can Teach. This model is not significantly

different from the Huntington model used in precommissioning instruction. It does, however, seem to place greater emphasis on service and personal responsibility than the Huntington model.

Lesson one is an hour long. During the last part of the hour, the student is encouraged to develop a list of obligations he identifies as unique to the military profession:

The instructor should now...allow the members of the class to list the specific obligations and responsibilities they see as officers in the Army....There is no approved solution for this objective beyond recognition of the requirements of the professional ethic in FM 100-1.<sup>6</sup>

This exercise prepares the student to examine the Army Ethic in FM 100-1 during lesson two.

Lesson two is the heart of MQS II ethics instruction; it is a three hour block of instruction on the institutional and individual values listed in FM 100-1.

The first hour focuses on Loyalty. During this hour, the student must describe the hierarchy of loyalty that an

officer is expected to commit himself to." He must also recognize that Loyalty "calls for us to put...principles higher than ourselves, our branch of service, or even our commander or unit if there is a conflict."<sup>7</sup>

The likelihood of encountering competing values and the need for selflessness in the military profession--both prominent in the concept of Duty according to this study--should be clear to the officer at this point in the course. The relationship among the values within the Army Ethic becomes less distinct, however, when the lesson plan expands the definition of Loyalty to include "such other fundamental values as personal integrity, and a firm commitment to justice and truth, as well as a concern for the well-being of...soldiers."<sup>8</sup> This expanded definition is useful as a transition into the next hour of lesson two, but it also makes it difficult for the student to identify the uniqueness of Loyalty within the Army Ethic.

The second hour of lesson two begins with a discussion of ethical relativism, a discussion intended to cause the student to consider further the nature of his profession.

The last part of this class works toward an understanding of selflessness: "everyone working toward the common good rather than their own self-interest."<sup>9</sup>

Hour three completes the discussion of FM 100-1 by exploring the concept of egoism. The student must "explain the difference between a healthy aspiration for self-improvement and selfish, unbridled ambition."<sup>10</sup> He must also "relate the importance of the value of integrity...and its relationship to character development."<sup>11</sup>

The final hour of ethics instruction at the basic course level, lesson three, requires the student to consider the "progression from mere compliance with standards to internalization of the values behind the standards."<sup>12</sup> During this hour, the student learns that mere compliance is not enough in a profession founded on ethical values: "an individual who complies with an ethical precept without knowing why he must comply is not truly carrying out an obligation; he is merely exhibiting obedience."<sup>13</sup>

Ethics instruction at the basic course level is well designed to take advantage of the limited time available. Lesson plans built around the Army Ethic as it is presented in FM 100-1 are likely to bring out many of the imperatives of Duty identified in this study. In some cases, however,

they are not presented to the student as imperatives. For example, "self" is acknowledged as an actor in ethical decisionmaking, but only in a negative sense, only as something to be overcome. Duty appears on a slide at the beginning of lesson two, but it is the least-discussed value within the Army Ethic according to the lesson plans. Furthermore, as the student makes his way through the five hours of basic course ethics instruction, the components of the Army Ethic may seem to blend together. These issues and the challenge of discussing the relationship of the values in the Army Ethic while at the same time maintaining their uniqueness will be addressed in chapter four.

#### OFFICER ADVANCED COURSE

The Military Qualification Standards Level III core curriculum is not yet complete. However, each service school teaches advanced course ethics from a common set of lesson plans prepared by the Center for Army Leadership.

The young captain who attends his advanced course receives thirty-two hours of leadership instruction; three of these hours focus on instruction in military ethics.

Hour one is "designed to spur...thinking about the complexities of personal values and how the complexity multiplies as an individual relates to others."<sup>14</sup>

The second hour of advanced course ethics instruction discusses the characteristics of a profession (15 minutes), the professional military ethic from FM 100-1 (10 minutes), and the sources of American military values (10 minutes). Within this hour, the instructor highlights the "many conflicts requiring difficult choices....the ethical responsibility to show courage....and the moral obligation to subordinate private interests to public welfare."<sup>15</sup>

The final hour of ethics instruction at the advance course level examines the "ethical decisionmaking process." This lesson requires students to examine the role of ethical principles as "filters" through which competing values may be compared and to work with a five-step decision making model described in chapter four of FM 22-100, Military Leadership.

Although these three hours directly address ethics, there are at least three additional hours of instruction in the advanced course leadership curriculum that may lead the student to a consideration of military ethics.

Lesson ten is entitled, "Command Climate." During this hour, students must "describe and analyze the factors which affect command climate and how they contribute or detract from ethical conduct."<sup>16</sup>

At lesson twelve, students study "Team Building and Unit Cohesion." Part of this lesson explores the commander's responsibility to "transmit Army ideals" to his unit.<sup>17</sup>

And, lesson fourteen looks at "Battlefield Stress" and requires students to "discuss the ethical implications of stress on the battlefield."<sup>18</sup>

The pattern of advanced course ethics instruction is by now a familiar one. Students first consider what it means to be a professional and then examine the Army Ethic. Once again, Duty enjoys little prominence; it appears on a viewgraph slide and may be mentioned during the ten minutes allocated to the Army Ethic at hour two. On the other hand, the emphasis at the advanced course level is on conflict resolution. This, and the introduction of a formal decision-making model, are new to the officer.

## COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE

The command and general staff college core curriculum includes twelve hours of leadership instruction; three hours focus on military ethics.

In hour one, students discuss "the professional Army Ethic," a discussion which "must include the values of the profession of arms, our national values, and values held by soldiers."<sup>19</sup> This lesson, like similar lessons in the first three levels of officer professional education, is built around chapter four of FM 100-1.

The second hour of CGSC ethics instruction examines "the ethical reasoning process used to help think through complex ethical dilemmas."<sup>20</sup> The ethical reasoning process in chapter four of FM 22-100 once again provides the basis of this instruction in decisionmaking.

The final hour of ethics instruction at this level of the officer's professional education encourages the student to consider "the ethical responsibilities of senior-level leaders."<sup>21</sup> Foremost among these responsibilities is "moral toughness." Based upon chapter three of FM 22-103,



Leadership and Command at Senior Levels, this lesson reminds the student that ethics "activates the organization to gain the moral ascendancy required to win."<sup>22</sup>

At the completion of the CGSC leadership block of instruction, each student must submit a short paper in which he explains his philosophy of leadership. Although this is a short exercise, the introspective student will find it impossible to consider leadership styles without first considering the part ethics plays in leadership.

Not surprisingly, Duty makes only a cameo appearance during CGSC ethics instruction, its appearance once again limited to a viewgraph slide listing the values in the Army Ethic from FM 100-1. In fact, based upon what has come before in the precommissioning through advanced course levels, much is familiar about ethics instruction at the CGSC level. However, the attempt to consider the differences in ethical responsibility from company grade to field grade officer is new to the curriculum; new, too, are the emphasis on moral toughness as the pivotal virtue of the senior leader and the paper requirement.

## THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE

The Army War College core course in leadership is entitled, "The Professional Leader." Among the objectives of the course are two that relate directly to ethics: "to recognize the ethical values and norms of the military profession and develop a personal approach for senior level leadership....to recognize and consider the ethical dimensions in making policy decisions."<sup>23</sup> The Professional Leader course includes four lessons of approximately three hours each; these lessons are reading-intensive and seminar in methodology. Each lesson, therefore, has the potential to generate discussion on ethics.

Lesson one explores "The Nature of the Individual." This lesson helps students "understand and appreciate that stresses related to the total liability contract of the soldier represent a significant factor in individual motivation in the military that is different from anything found in the civilian sector."<sup>24</sup>

Lesson two builds upon the first lesson and examines "The Nature of the Organization." In this lesson, students compare "major management theories and how they apply to organizations,"<sup>25</sup> both military and non-military.

Lesson three looks at "The Nature of the Leader," and "examines leadership from a classic description of a good leader pre-World War...to the unit commander of today."<sup>26</sup> Like the last lesson of CGSC instruction, this lesson requires the student to "elevate his focus" and to consider how he may have to change his leadership style as he reaches levels of senior leadership.

During the final lesson of the War College core curriculum, the officer studies "Professionalism and Ethics." This lesson and the readings which support it ask the student to consider three questions:

1. What is the essential relationship between society and its armed forces?
2. What is the responsibility of the military professional when his or her perception of the threat to national security differs from that of civilian officials or the general public?
3. How does the military professional balance his or her desire for career advancement with the demand of selfless service to the nation?<sup>27</sup>

The answers to these questions go a long way toward helping the officer understand Duty as part of the Army Ethic.

The War College leadership curriculum also includes a writing requirement. The wording of this requirement is significant:

Each student is required to prepare a paper of approximately 2000 words which includes... an expression of the student's values, professional concepts, ethical considerations, knowledge, and experiences, all integrated into a personal philosophy of leadership that will best meet the challenges to senior Army leaders in the future.<sup>20</sup>

Each year, three papers submitted by previous classes are included in an appendix to the leadership syllabus as an illustration of how this requirement may be met.

Appropriately, the War College leadership curriculum is much less structured than the levels of professional education which precede it. Duty may or may not be addressed by name, but many of the imperatives that make it up will surely be discussed in response to the questions during lesson four and to the writing requirement.

## CONCLUSIONS

As a separate value, Duty does not emerge as an important part of leadership and ethics instruction within the Army's professional education system today. On the other hand, many of the imperatives of Duty identified by this study are prominent within the ethics curriculum.

With this knowledge of the school system as background, chapter four will look at how closely the definition of Duty proposed by this study matches the way Duty and its imperatives are represented within the Army school system.

## ENDNOTES

### CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup> Department of the Army, Review of Education and Training for Officers, (1978): M-I-44.

<sup>2</sup> Department of the Army, MOS I Training Support Package: Leadership, (1986): 4-7.

<sup>3</sup> The United States Military Academy at West Point does present a separate course in Duty instruction for cadets of the lower three classes. Generally, this course is a twelve-hour block of instruction conducted during the summer training months and early in the academic year. The course uses a definition of Duty very much like the definition offered in FM 100-1. In any case, since this study seeks the "common denominator" of Duty instruction for the officer corps, it does not examine the USMA program.

<sup>4</sup> MOS I, 2-B-7.

<sup>5</sup> Department of the Army, MOS II: DA PAM 01-9001.00-0010 (1986): 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>7</sup> Department of the Army, MOS II: DA PAM 01-9001.00-0020 (1986): 9.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Department of the Army, MOS II: DA PAM 01-9001.00-0030 (1986): 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>14</sup> Department of the Army, Officer Advanced Course Leadership Curriculum (1984): LP 2-7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., LP 3-10.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., LP 10-3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., LP 13-9.

18 Ibid., LP 14-23.

19 Department of the Army, Command and General Staff College Leadership Curriculum (1987): 11.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Department of the Army, FM 22-103 (1987): 18.

23 Department of the Army, The Professional Leader (1985): 1.

24 Ibid., 1-1.

25 Ibid., 2-1.

26 Ibid., 3-1.

27 Ibid., 3-2.

28 Ibid., 5.

## Chapter Four

### Toward Richer and Thinner Meanings

Since the Army ethics curriculum described in chapter three virtually ignores Duty, there might seem little to expect from this chapter, a chapter conceived when this study began as an assessment of Duty-related instruction in the schoolhouse. Nevertheless, there is still much to say about Duty and about the way it is presented to the officer corps in the classroom.

Based on the description of Army ethics instruction in chapter three, this chapter looks at how the five imperatives of Duty are represented in the Army ethics curriculum. If the imperatives of Duty are present in the curriculum, then this chapter can conclude that Duty instruction in its current form meets the need of the officer corps for a concept of Duty like the one defined in chapter two. At the same time, it may be that there is a better way to meet that need, a more effective method of explaining Duty to the officer corps.



Therefore, this chapter considers both the content and method of Army ethics instruction. It looks at how content and method work together in the schoolhouse to develop the officer's concept of Duty.

#### THE CONTENT OF ARMY ETHICS INSTRUCTION

The imperatives of Duty derived from literature in chapter two included:

1. defense of the United States
2. support of the duly-constituted government
3. dedication to the military profession  
expressed by the life-long pursuit of knowledge (the development of judgment) and the life-long pursuit of personal excellence (the development of self)
4. selflessness
5. courage

Most of these are present in some form at every level of the officer's professional education. One is never mentioned to him at all.

The officer is constantly reminded that he must "support and defend the Constitution." At certain levels of his professional education, however, this reminder is little more than an entry on a viewgraph slide. Sometimes this is referred to as his Duty, and sometimes he is told it is a matter of Loyalty. Moreover, whenever the words "support and defend" appear in the curriculum, they appear together. After a while, the phrase "support and defend" seems almost absent-minded and mnemonic. There seems little attempt to consider the implications of "support" and "defend" separately. Nevertheless, the first two imperatives of Duty are represented at every level within the military education system.

The third imperative, "dedication to the profession," is also represented at every level of the officer's education. Interestingly, each level uses a different model of professionalism as the basis of instruction. Emphasis on the officer's role as a member of a profession is especially apparent in the precommissioning, officer basic, and officer advanced courses.

Although the officer is reminded of the importance of professionalism each time he attends school, the ethics curriculum seems to stop short of mandating to him how professionalism ought to be expressed. This study contends that, like the medical doctor, the professional officer is ethically bound to the "life-long pursuit of knowledge." Within the Army school system, however, knowledge is presented as part of the leadership framework described in FM 22-100; it is not presented as binding in any way. This is an important distinction. A student might interpret this to mean that knowledge is merely a prerequisite of good leadership and miss the point that by the nature of his profession the officer is ethically bound to the pursuit of knowledge. This imperative of Duty is not represented within the ethics curriculum at any level.

Nor is "personal excellence" portrayed as an imperative of Duty. When "self" is mentioned in the curriculum, it is most often mentioned as something negative. The exception to this negative portrayal of "self" is in the officer basic course. There, the discussion of egoism encourages the comparison of ambition, self-development, selflessness, and selfishness. In general, however, discussion about the officer's responsibility for self-development is not presented to him as something binding. It is not presented to him as his Duty.

Because "selflessness" is considered one of the institutional values of the Army Ethic in FM 100-1, it is mentioned at each level of the officer's professional education. Selflessness, in fact, receives more attention than any other value in the ethics curriculum.

"Courage" is one of the individual values according to FM 100-1. Therefore, whenever the viewgraph slide of institutional and individual values from FM 100-1 makes an appearance in the classroom--and it makes an appearance at every level except the War College--courage is mentioned. However, meaningful discussion of the importance of courage takes place only at the CGSC and War College levels. Prior to CGSC, there seems little effort to distinguish between physical and moral courage; there is no apparent attempt within the ethics curriculum to portray courage as an institutional as well as an individual value.

In general, then, four of the five imperatives of Duty as this study defines them are present in the Army ethics curriculum in one form or another. The pursuit of knowledge and the pursuit of personal excellence as expressions of dedication to the profession are essentially missing.

However, this merely establishes that the imperatives of Duty are mentioned somewhere in the curriculum. It says nothing about how the officer will gain an understanding of the way the imperatives of Duty relate to each other. It remains for an analysis of the methodology of Army ethics instruction to complete the picture.

#### THE METHOD OF ARMY ETHICS INSTRUCTION

Long before anyone thought about ethics or military professionalism, primitive artists covered their artwork with abstract designs because they feared that unoccupied space attracted evil spirits. Art historians refer to this phenomenon as horror vacui: literally, a fear of empty spaces.<sup>1</sup> Ethics instruction within the military education system--especially at the early levels--exhibits tendencies toward a sort of horror vacui. In this case, it might be more accurately described as the fear of leaving something out.

For example, in one hour at lesson three of precommissioning instruction, the instructor must cover basic American values derived from the Constitution, Institutional and Individual values from FM 100-1, and the values derived from the officer's commissioning statement.

Included in the instructor support package for this lesson are three viewgraph slides:

VGT #3-1

Liberty

Equality

Human Dignity

Justice

VGT #3-3

Patriotism

Valor

Fidelity

Competence

VGT #3-2

Commitment

Competence

Candor

Courage

Loyalty

Duty

Selfless Service

Integrity

This is a list of abstractions to make any primitive artist proud. More to the point, it is simply not possible to consider these words in any meaningful way in an hour. This class, and some others like it has the potential to become an exercise in memorization, anathema to the teaching of ethics:

Values have to be carefully analyzed, and an attempt must be made to distinguish between

legitimate and illegitimate uses, richer and thinner meanings....A class in ethics ought to provide a significant occasion to grapple with some of them.<sup>2</sup>

There is little time to grapple with any single value when there are so many to be covered in one class.

The lesson on professional ethics during the advance course is even more frenetic. In one hour, students at the advanced course must discuss the "key characteristics of a profession" (15 minutes, without viewgraph slide), "the values of the professional military ethic" (10 minutes, with viewgraph slide), and "the sources of American military values" (10 minutes, with viewgraph slide).

Admittedly, the student has seen some of this material before, and not every instructor uses these slides anyway. It is also true that students often find a way to talk about a single value for the entire hour, especially in small group instruction. Case studies, too, can help instructors isolate a specific value for discussion. But many of these initiatives on the part of instructors and students seem to be approaches designed to overcome the curriculum and methodology in their current form, not education that takes advantage of them.

Here is the point: there is simply not enough time to develop the student's understanding of an Army Ethic eight values long. Explaining to the student that these eight values are two-tiered, institutional and individual, does little to alleviate his frustration at facing so many abstract words. Further exacerbating the problem is the Army's insistence on redundancy. At each of the first three levels of professional education, the officer explores virtually the same questions : what is a profession....what are the values derived from the Constitution...what are the values which make up the Army Ethic according to FM 100-1? When the limited time available is used up trying to cover everything, even things that have been covered in earlier levels of professional education, the classes become exercises in the consumption of information and not the opportunities for education that they should be.

Furthermore, it seems that within the school system the values of the Army Ethic are often considered in a vacuum, as ends unto themselves. Yet these values do not function in a vacuum in the workplace. For example, this study has already noted that "selflessness" receives more attention in ethics instruction than any other value. Because this attention exists in a vacuum, however, "selflessness" can



become easily confused with self-abnegation, and self-abnegation is unacceptable to most officers. "Selflessness" can only be fully understood and accepted when it is juxtaposed with "self" in the sense explained earlier in this study.

Generally, then, instruction in the Army Ethic seems without focus. It does not meet the needs of the officer corps as this study understands them from the survey of literature. The officer needs a yardstick against which he can measure his professional life. He needs to understand how values fit together in the military profession. He needs a qualitative feeling about the profession rather than something quantifiable. He needs something he can internalize, a professional conscience, not a checklist.

As a start toward fulfilling this need for its officers, the Army education system must recognize that it cannot cover such a broad subject as ethics in its entirety each time an officer reports to a school. At present, only the War College seems to concede this. Early ethics instruction should lay a foundation of understanding; later instruction should focus on how the officer's increasing rank and responsibility change his ethical responsibility. Successive levels of officer professional education should build upon each other much more than they do at present.

And there should never be a requirement for the officer to memorize lists of values; he must be made to articulate the meaning of values.

For that reason, the requirement for each officer at CGSC and the War College to write a paper in which he articulates his values is a good requirement, one that might be beneficial even for the very junior officer. A written requirement is not a panacea, however. Without a mechanism for providing feedback to the officer about his ideas--either from his instructors or from his classmates--he may get the mistaken impression that values are entirely a personal matter.

Finally, this study believes that the difficulties noted in Army ethics instruction may be symptomatic of a larger problem--ambiguity and redundancy in the Army Ethic as it is presented in FM 100-1. For all of the reasons detailed in chapters two, three, and four of this study, the Army Ethic should be revised. Specifically, the Army Ethic should be made shorter by abandoning the two-tiered concept and bringing similar values back together; ideally, in the profession of arms, the distinction between institutional and individual values is artificial anyway. Furthermore, the Army Ethic should be made clearer by redefining the

values which make it up, a process which should focus on the uniqueness and interrelationship of values in equal measure.

In a more manageable form, the Army Ethic can reasonably be the focus of the study of ethics at each level of professional education. The officer can use valuable classroom time reconsidering a more manageable Army Ethic to see how its influence upon his professional life has changed since the last time he was in the Army schoolhouse. This process of making the Army Ethic clearer and more manageable should begin with a redefinition of Duty, the essential value of the Army Ethic.

Of course, there must be some incentive for the Army to redefine Duty. Chapter five will conclude this study and discuss some of the implications of the concept of Duty outside the schoolhouse.

## ENDNOTES

### CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup> Richard Tansey, Gardner's Art Through the Ages, (1980): 979.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Stromberg, The Teaching of Ethics in the Military, (1982): 45.

## Chapter Five

### Sentinels at the Bacchanal

Michael Shaara's novel of the Civil War, The Killer Angels, appears on reading lists at each level of the officer's professional military education. Those who have read it will remember a scene at the end of the novel when Robert E. Lee realizes that his defeat at Gettysburg probably means defeat for the Confederacy. They will remember, too, that at Lee's side a pensive James Longstreet reaches the same conclusion and wonders aloud whether he can continue to lead men into battle "for nothing." Softly, Lee reminds him:

If the war goes on--and it will, it will--  
what else can we do but go on? It is the same  
question forever, what else can we do? If they  
fight, we will fight with them. And does it  
matter after all who wins? Was that ever really  
the question?<sup>1</sup>

Obviously not. For Shaara's fictional Lee, and for all soldiers, there is a more important question, a higher purpose. There is Duty.

Duty is always there in the life of the soldier. It is the higher purpose, the thing that separates soldier from mercenary. In the profession of arms results are important, but victory and defeat, success and failure, are labels affixed after the fact. Results are external to the essential act of military service. A sense of Duty is internal to each soldier, something beyond results. Victories and defeats keep politicians going; Duty keeps soldiers going.

This study considers Duty the essential value of the military profession. This study calls for a redefinition of Duty, for emphasis on Duty in the schoolhouse, and for reconsideration of the Army Ethic to place Duty in a position of greater prominence. The most compelling reason for changing the way the officer looks at Duty is that the world in which he must exercise his concept of Duty is changing.

For example, in the March 1988 issue of Parameters, author Tom Wolfe describes four phases of freedom through which he believes America has passed since its birth as an independent nation. According to Wolfe, America is now in its fourth phase of freedom, a phase characterized by "freedom from religion." Around him, Wolfe sees evidence of

boundless affluence and materialism in American society. Along with this materialism, he observes "the earnest rejection of the constraints of religion...the rules of morality...even the simple rules of conduct and ethics."<sup>2</sup>

Wolfe is not a doomsayer. In fact, he finds in this evolution of freedom something fascinating, something possible only in America. But, at the same time, he recognizes the difficult position in which this places the professional soldier:

For the first time in the history of man, it is possible for every man to live the life of an aristocrat. I marvel at it, and I wonder at it, and I write about it. But you will have to deal with it. You are going to find yourselves required to be sentinels at the bacchanal.<sup>3</sup>

Wolfe calls the military professional to a higher standard, a standard that will require a greater appreciation of Duty.

Perhaps more than ever before, the professional officer is aware of the gap between societal and military values, a gap that most of the authors cited in this study agree must remain open. The payoff, then, for the kind of reconsideration of Duty that this study proposes is

moral toughness. Properly understood, Duty promotes moral toughness; just as important, it precludes moral arrogance. The professional officer can reconcile his position in society only if he understands the balance inherent in the concept of Duty described by this study.

Therefore, the search for an understanding of Duty must not be dismissed as merely an esoteric academic exercise. If the professional officer goes to war today, he will probably fight for a nation with an obvious aversion to war. He will probably fight in a less-than-total-war environment for very limited and vaguely-defined political objectives. He will probably fight an adversary who will meet him on the field of battle with the fanaticism of a religious crusade. Such circumstances will surely test his concept of Duty.

Duty is a habit. That is why it is important that the Army send the right messages about Duty to its officer corps now, during peacetime. In 1943, a British author had this to say about character:

a man of character in peace becomes a man of courage in war. He cannot be selfish in peace and yet be unselfish in war. Character...is the daily choice of right instead of wrong; it is a moral quality which grows to maturity in peace



and is not suddenly developed on the outbreak of war. For war, in spite of much that we have heard to the contrary, has no power to transform, it merely exaggerates the good and evil that are in us, till it is plain for all to read; it cannot change, it exposes.\*

The Army Ethic and the Army school system must lay the foundation of a proper Duty habit for the officer corps. They fulfill that responsibility now; they can do better.

This study has implications outside of the schoolhouse as well. For example, leaders at every level must recognize that under the current ethics curriculum, officers--especially junior officers--will come to them with the vocabulary of the Army Ethic but without an understanding of the Army Ethic; they will know the words but not what they mean. Admittedly, this will be more or less true under any curriculum. And, in any case, meaningful education in the Army Ethic must take place under the tutelage of leaders in the field. The Military Standards Qualification System is the first step in accounting for this. Redefining Duty as this study suggests should be the next.

Another implication of this study has to do with the synergism between tactical doctrine and the Army Ethic. In other words, some tactical doctrine may be more compatible with the Army Ethic than others. The Army's current tactical doctrine, Airland Battle, places great demand on the officer to understand the non-linear battlefield and to demonstrate initiative at every level of command. Contrary to past doctrine which seemed to emphasize other skills and to propose a cog-in-the-wheel role for many levels of command, Airland Battle doctrine is best served by a Duty concept that demands constant study of the art of war, physical but especially moral courage, and the kind of risk taking possible only in a leader who understands what selflessness really means. Airland Battle doctrine requires a Duty concept like the one defined in this study.

Finally, the most important implication of this study concerns the way changes in the Army as an institution-- policies, rules, regulations--affect the way the individual officer understands Duty. This study has concentrated on the individual's responsibility to the institution. Clearly, the institution has a responsibility to the individual. Changing policies send messages to the officer about his Duty such that when an officer learns of a policy affecting promotion, pay, care of his family, or assignment his understanding of Duty is either clarified or clouded.

Duty, therefore, may be a good litmus paper test of a policy before it is implemented. Further work in this area might look at the affect Title IV or below-the-zone promotion policies have on the officer's understanding of Duty. The officer corps can only benefit from such discussion.

Someone once compared the effort of directing the Army to steering an aircraft carrier. As the analogy goes, if the Captain turns the rudder too fast in either direction, the aircraft on deck will slide into the sea. If he turns the rudder back and forth, the ship will move from side to side, but the direction of travel will remain unchanged. If, however, the Captain moves the rudder just a little bit and holds it in that position for a long time, the ship will eventually begin to turn as he wants it to. To do that, of course, the Captain must have a vision of where he wants the ship to go, long before it gets there.

The Army, too, needs a vision. In large measure, that vision is the Army Ethic. In the opinion of this study, the Army Ethic requires a change, a slight change, a change sensitive to the power of abstraction.

Outlining that change is what this study has been about. This study defines Duty as the aggregate of five imperatives: defense of the United States, support of the

government in the performance of its constitutional duties, dedication to the military profession, selflessness, and courage. Because the profession suffers equally when its members lack any of these imperatives or exhibit them in excess, balance is the key to the application of Duty in the professional officer's life.

Balance is vital to the concept of Duty. It is vital because without balance, the words and abstractions contained in the Army Ethic lose their relevance to free human beings. The professional officer must recognize the unique contributions that he, as an individual, can bring to the institution, and he must recognize that he cannot always put the needs and desires of others ahead of his own: he must strike a balance between self and selflessness. He must strike a balance between devotion to his profession and devotion to his family. He must strike a balance between being an instrument of the state and being a responsible, free citizen. He must strike a balance between his support for the duly-elected or appointed representatives of the people and his obligation to support and defend the constitution. He must find a rational point of balance between cowardice on the one hand and rashness on the other so he can exercise both physical and moral courage. And finally, the professional officer must seek a

balance between what he sees as his responsibility to the institution and what he feels he has a right to expect from the institution.

The Army should adopt the definition of Duty proposed by this study because it accounts for the importance of balance, because it is well-founded in the literature of the profession, and because intuitively it makes sense. The definition of Duty presented in chapter two of this study builds on the fact that the whole of the word Duty will always be greater than the sum of its parts. The Army should adopt this definition even though the next step must be revision of the Army Ethic.

Hemingway would understand the power and dignity of a word like Duty. This study ends with the hope that the authors of a new Army Ethic also understand.

## ENDNOTES

### CHAPTER FIVE

- <sup>1</sup> Michael Shaara, The Killer Angels, (1974): 346.
- <sup>2</sup> Tom Wolfe, "The Meaning of Freedom," (1988): 8.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 14.
- <sup>4</sup> Lord Moran, Anatomy of Courage, (1987): 160.

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